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Supporting the 21st Century Sailor and Marine

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By Vice Adm. Matthew Nathan, U.S. Navy surgeon general and chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

One of my top priorities since becoming the Navy Surgeon General last November is to ensure that Navy Medicine is strategically aligned with the imperatives and priorities of the Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps. Our focus remains in alignment with our Navy and Marine Corps leadership as we support the defense strategic guidance, “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century” issued by the President and Secretary of Defense earlier this year. The Chief of Naval Operations in his “Sailing Directions” has articulated the Navy’s core responsibilities and Navy Medicine stands ready as we move forward at this pivotal time in our history.



As such, I am also proud to report that Navy Medicine is a key partner in supporting the new “21st Century Sailor and Marine” initiative that the Secretary of the Navy announced recently. This initiative is a set of objectives, programs and policies across a spectrum of wellness that maximizes the personal readiness of Sailors, Marines and their families.

Personal readiness of our people directly relates to our ability to maintain a fit and ready force to answer the call when our nation needs us. The programs included as part of the new initiative focus on building and maintaining the resiliency of the force which are vital after a decade of combat.

Everyday across the globe, we support the operational missions and core capabilities of the Navy and Marine Corps by maintaining warfighter health readiness, delivering the continuum of care from the battlefield to the bedside and protecting the health of all those entrusted to our care. Force Health Protection is at the epicenter of everything we do. It is an expression of our Core Values of Honor, Courage and Commitment and the imperative for our world-wide engagement in support of expeditionary medical operations and combat casualty care. It is at the very foundation of our continuum of care in support of the warfighter and optimizes our ability to promote, protect and restore their health. It is both an honor and obligation.

The heart of the new “21st Century Sailor and Marine” initiative is to provide preventive measures to ensure the readiness of our naval personnel. Health is not simply the absence of infirmity or disease – it is the complete state of physical, mental, spiritual and social well

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being. The overall goal of the new program is to provide Sailors and Marines with the support network, health care, and skills needed so they can overcome any adversity and thrive. We aim to build a culture where all leaders recognize the importance of providing timely support to our Sailors and their families which is key to military readiness.

The men and women of Navy Medicine will play a vital role in supporting this initiative. As the Navy continues to highlight the dangers of prescription and synthetic drug abuse, deglamorize the use of alcohol and smoking and reinforce healthy alternatives while on liberty, the line community will look to us to provide them our support and expertise in these areas. I have every confidence that you will all be there ready to support them and this important program.

Thank you for suiting up every day. I am so proud to be part of your team, and it is my honor to serve with you. I look forward to seeing you around the Fleet.

For more information about [Navy Medicine](#) check out the 2012 editions of MEDNEWS by clicking [here](#).



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